DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 458 027 PS 029 876

AUTHOR Derrick-Davis, Karen
TITLE Building Strong Neighborhoods for Families with Children. A Guide for Public Dialogue and Problem Solving.
INSTITUTION Topsfield Foundation, Pomfret, CT. Study Circles Resource Center.
SPONS AGENCY Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD.
PUB DATE 2000-00-00
NOTE 47p.
AVAILABLE FROM Study Circles Resource Center, P.O Box 203, Pomfret, CT 06258. Tel: 860-928-2616; Fax: 860-928-3713; e-mail: scrc@studycircles.org; Web site: http://www.studycircles.org.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS At Risk Persons; Change Strategies; Community Action; *Discussion Groups; Discussion (Teaching Technique); Leaders Guides; *Neighborhood Improvement; *Neighborhoods; *Problem Solving; Teaching Guides
IDENTIFIERS *Study Circles

ABSTRACT

Based on the view that strengthening families and neighborhoods can improve the life chances of vulnerable children, this discussion guide is designed to help communities participating in study circle programs to bring people from all segments of the neighborhood together to share different views and experiences, thereby building stronger relationships and working together to find solutions. The introduction to this discussion guide describes what a study circle is, how study circles move people from talk to action, and how to make the most of a study circle. Discussion materials are grouped in four sessions: (1) What is our neighborhood like for children and families? (2) What do families face in our neighborhood? (3) How can we make our neighborhood a better place for families with children? and (4) What can we do? Each section includes an outline of discussion topics, facilitator tips, questions to consider, and preparation for the next session or action suggestions. The discussion guide also includes tips for study circle facilitators, suggestions for organizing study circles, keys for organizing study circles on families and children, and resources for further action and discussion. The guide concludes with acknowledgments of people who organized study circles to test this guide. (KB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 458 027

PS

Building Strong Neighborhoods for Families with Children

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Family
家庭
Familia
ครอบครัว
ถอยถ้อ
가족
Gia-đình
ក្រុសារ
Tsev neeg
عائلة
Qoys

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
F. Chambers
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
1

PS 029876

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A guide for public dialogue and problem solving

Building Strong Neighborhoods for Families with Children

Family
家庭
Familia
ครอบครัว
ถอบถัว
가족
Gia-đình
គ្រួសារ
Tsev neeg
عائله
Qoys

Study Circles Resource Center

A project of the Topsfield Foundation, Inc.

STUDY CIRCLES
RESOURCE CENTER

The Study Circles Resource Center developed *Building Strong Neighborhoods for Families with Children* in collaboration with the Annie E. Casey Foundation as part of the *Making Connections* project. *Making Connections* is the centerpiece of the Casey Foundation's multifaceted effort to improve the life chances of vulnerable children by helping to strengthen their families and neighborhoods. *Making Connections* is under way in 22 cities where the Foundation and a broad array of local stakeholders are working to build support and momentum around the proposition that children do better when their families are strong, and families do better when they live in strong neighborhoods.

This guide can be used alone or in conjunction with *Building Strong Neighborhoods*, a guide also available from SCRC.

SCRC is a project of the Topsfield Foundation, Inc., a nonprofit, nonpartisan foundation dedicated to advancing deliberative democracy and improving the quality of public life in the United States. SCRC carries out this mission by helping communities organize study circles - small-group, democratic, face-to-face discussions that give everyday people opportunities to make a difference in their communities.

Study circle organizers bring large numbers of people into these small-group discussions on the same issue at the same time. These study circle programs lead to a wide range of action efforts.

We would like to help you organize study circles throughout your neighborhood. SCRC offers assistance, free of charge, to organizers of large-scale study circle programs. SCRC can provide more detailed advice on organizing and facilitating study circles, more copies of this guide, or copies of study circle guides on other issues (including race, crime and violence, education, growth and urban sprawl, immigration, diversity, neighborhood, and youth issues). Please contact us: SCRC, P.O. Box 203, Pomfret, CT 06258. Phone: 860-928-2616. Fax: 860-928-3713. E-mail: scrc@studycircles.org. Visit our web site at: www.studycircles.org.

This guide was produced by the Study Circles Resource Center with funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, 701 St. Paul Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202. Phone: 410-547-6600. Fax: 410-547-6624. Web site: www.aecf.org. The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private, charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States.

Writer: *Karen Derrick-Davis*

Concept advisors: *Carolyne Abdullah, Sarah vL. Campbell, Matt Leighninger, Martha L. McCoy, Patrick Scully*

Editorial assistant: *Molly Holme Barrett*

Editorial assistance: *Michele Archie and Howard D Terry (Harbinger Institute), Phil Rose*

Research assistance: *Reem Ghandour*

Layout and design: *M & M Design*

Managing editor and project director: *Amy Malick*

© 2000 Topsfield Foundation, Inc.

Printed in the United States on recycled paper using vegetable- based ink

Building Strong Neighborhoods for Families with Children

Table of Contents

Introduction

Moving from talk to action 3

What's in this discussion guide? 3

What is a study circle? 4

Making the most of your study circle 5

Discussion Materials

Session 1 What is our neighborhood like for children and their families? 6

Session 2 What do families face in our neighborhood? 8

Session 3 How can we make our neighborhood a better place for families with children? 11

Session 4 Making a difference: What can we do? 18

Tips for Study Circle Facilitators 26

How to Organize Study Circles in Your Neighborhood 31

Keys to Organizing Study Circles on Families and Children 34

Resources for Further Action and Discussion 36

Acknowledgments 42

The languages portrayed on the cover represent a few of the many languages spoken by people in neighborhoods using this guide.

Introduction

What is it like to live in your neighborhood?

- ◊ Do you cross the street when you see a group of young people headed your way?
- ◊ Does the sight of children playing in the park bring a spark of happiness to your day?
- ◊ Do you wonder if the children you see are being well fed? Educated?
- ◊ Do you know the children in your neighborhood?
- ◊ Do they remind you of the joy in life?
- ◊ Do they make you wonder about the future?

It's good to think about how it is for young people and families who live here. Children are the future of our neighborhoods. When they grow up, they will be neighbors. They will have jobs, and be leaders, artists, teachers, and business owners. They will give us their vision, leadership, and role modeling. Young people are part of your neighborhood today, too. Whether or not children live in your home, you know they have a big effect on your community.

Today, families face some hard problems:

- ◊ There are more and more single-parent homes.
- ◊ In two-parent homes, both parents work full time or even more.
- ◊ Families don't have much money.
- ◊ There is a lack of good child care, and relatives are not often around to help out.
- ◊ People are unclear about what they want taught in school.
- ◊ Parents can't help out in school when they work all the time.
- ◊ Parents are scared about guns, drugs and crime.
- ◊ Parents can't always control the TV, movies, music or the Internet that their children are exposed to.

The good news is that more and more neighborhoods are trying new ways to support families. Neighbors are helping each other. People are relating better with schools, police, and other agencies. People from faith groups, businesses and government are working together. In many neighborhoods, people are talking and planning together.

Still, when people meet to talk about helping families, it's mostly parents who show up. Parents can do a lot. But to make lasting changes for the better, neighborhoods need everyone's ideas, work, and talent. Study circles are one way to get all segments of the neighborhood involved.

Study circle programs bring all kinds of people together to share different views and experiences. In the process, people begin to build stronger relationships and work together to find solutions. We believe this is necessary for any long-term change to occur.

Moving from talk to action

Often, organizers see a problem, offer a solution, and get folks to take some kind of action. Study circles are different. Study circles present an issue and help people talk about it and come to their own conclusions. Study circles move people from talk to action. How?

- By building understanding among people of different backgrounds and opinions.
- By giving people a chance to look at a range of views and ideas.
- By giving people of the community a way to build new and different relationships with each other and with organizations.
- By creating better ways for people to relate with police, teachers, elected officials, and social workers.
- By helping people take "ownership" of the problems, and the solutions.

What's in this discussion guide?

Session 1: **What is our neighborhood like for children and their families?**
Get to know other group members, talk about our experiences and ideas about neighborhoods and families, and listen to each other's perspectives.

Session 2: **What do families face in our neighborhood?**
Explore different views about the challenges people in our neighborhood face.

Session 3: **How can we make our neighborhood a better place for families with children?**
Discuss our neighborhood's strengths, and talk about some different ways to approach the challenges we face.

Session 4: **Making a difference: What can we do?**
Look at specific ways to make a difference in our neighborhood.

Introduction

What is a neighborhood-wide study circle program?

It's when people all over the neighborhood meet in study circles – small, diverse groups – over the same period of time. All the study circles work on the same issue, and seek solutions for the whole neighborhood.

Study circle programs need the support of key groups and leaders in town. They can include hundreds of people. Study circles can be used to talk about many issues, such as families, race, schools, crime, violence, neighborhoods, growth and development, and education.

As a result, people from many backgrounds form new networks in order to work together. They see common ground and want to take action for themselves, in small groups, as voters, or as part of a larger effort.

What is a study circle?

A study circle is a group of about 12 people from different backgrounds and viewpoints who meet several times to talk about an issue. In a study circle, everyone has an equal voice, and people try to understand each other's views. They do not have to agree with each other. The idea is to share concerns and look for ways to make things better.

A facilitator helps the group focus on different views and makes sure the discussion goes well. This person is not an expert on the issue.

Making the most of your study circle

How people talk to each other is as important as what they talk about. Here are some tips on how to make it go well.

- **Attend every session.** Have people commit to come. This builds trust and friendship. People will talk more deeply about how they think and feel.
- **Be prepared.** Get familiar with the materials. Look over the study guide's questions, viewpoints and ideas. The guide will help you expand your own thinking.
- **Take charge of the discussion.** The facilitator keeps the discussion moving and on track. "Facilitate" means to "make easy." Everyone can do this. Learn to set ground rules and help people stick to them.
- **You are not alone.** If your study circle is part of a larger community-wide program, others will be talking about this issue. Here are some ideas to make it successful:
  - Have a kick-off session with all the groups.
  - Meet with public officials.
  - Have several groups meet with each other during the process.
  - Have a wrap-up "action" session with all the groups.

Session 1

What Is Our Neighborhood Like for Children and Their Families?

FACILITATOR TIPS FOR SESSION 1:

- Divide the session into four parts. Use the amount of time suggested for each as a guide.
- Welcome everyone and explain your role as a neutral facilitator.
- Explain a little bit about the study circle program in your neighborhood. How did it come about? Who are the sponsors? How many other study circles are meeting?
- Make everyone feel welcome. Be sure each person has a chance to speak and to hear the other group members.
- Ask someone to take notes.
- Print the notes on large sheets of paper so that everyone can read them.
- Save the notes so that you can refer to them in later sessions.

By coming to this study circle, we show that we care about children. We also care about families and the future of our neighborhood. Each of us has something important to offer. We all want to make our neighborhood a better place in which to live.

Today, as we get to know each other, we will share some of our hopes and concerns. We will say what we think makes a neighborhood a good place for families and children. Sharing our own stories and ideas will begin the study circle.

Part 1: Introductions

(30 minutes)

- Tell us your name and a little bit about the family you grew up in.
- The facilitator will help us set ground rules on how to run the group. Here is a list to help us get started. Feel free to add your ideas and make your own list.

Sample Ground Rules

- Everyone gets a fair hearing.
- Share "air time."
- One person speaks at a time. Don't interrupt.
- Speak for yourself, not others.
- If your feelings get hurt, say so, and say why.
- It's OK to disagree. No name-calling. No personal attacks.
- Keep the talk moving and on track.

Part 2: What is our neighborhood like for families with children?

(50 minutes)

How we were raised affects how we think about families, children, and neighborhoods. The questions below help us think about this and how things are now.

- Tell us about the neighborhood where you grew up. What stories can you share that give us a picture of what it was like for families?
- Do you think of "family" today differently than you used to?
- What do you think this neighborhood is like for families with children? Tell a story about what is good or not so good.
- How does your growing up compare to how it is for families today? What is better? What concerns you?
- What makes you care about this issue? Why is it important?

Part 3: Creating a vision for our neighborhood

(20 minutes)

This is an exercise to share lots of ideas. Here's how it goes:

1. Think for a minute without speaking: Imagine that in 10 years this is the ideal neighborhood for families. What does it look like? How do things work? How would it feel?
2. Now say your ideas out loud. Feel free to speak. No idea is too small or too great. What is your "ideal" place?

   (As you speak, the recorder will write your ideas for all to see.)
3. There are no right or wrong answers. Ask questions to learn more. Don't argue about or discuss ideas. Keep moving from idea to idea.
4. As the flow of ideas slows down, look back over the list. What new ideas are coming to you?

Part 4: Thinking about our discussion

(20 minutes)

- ◊ What are some of the main themes of our discussion?
- ◊ What worked well in today's meeting?
- ◊ What changes would you make next time?

Preparing for Session 2

This week, ask family, friends and neighbors the questions you answered today. Share some of your ideas with them.

Session 2

What Do Families Face In Our Neighborhood?

FACILITATOR TIPS FOR SESSION 2:

- ◊ Divide the session into four parts. Use the amount of time suggested for each as a guide.
- ◊ Post the notes from Session 1 for all to see.
- ◊ Have someone take notes so you can refer to them later.
- ◊ To start Part 2 of this session, ask a few members of your study circle to read each view out loud.
- ◊ After this, ask some of the "Questions to think about" listed on the next page.

Before we can take action to change things, we need to understand what we are trying to change. Each of us thinks differently about this. Let's listen to each other's views. This session helps us look at a range of views about the challenges families face.

Part 1: Reflect on what we are learning

(20 minutes)

- ◊ Look at the notes. What were the key ideas from our last meeting? Would you add or change anything?
- ◊ What did you learn from talking with your family or friends? What was it like to have this kind of discussion?

Part 2: What are families up against in our neighborhoods?

(60 minutes)

These views are different ways of looking at the problems faced by the families in our neighborhood. Each view is different. Each is written as if someone who holds that view is saying it. These views will spark our own ideas. Feel free to add your own views.

View #1

Neighbors don't support each other like they used to.

There's not much of a sense of community any more. There used to be a lot of relatives (aunts, uncles, and grandparents) around to help families out. Not any more. No one else has really stepped in to take their place and lend a hand. We don't know our neighbors well. We don't look after each other.

People are so busy. It's hard to connect to one another and the neighborhood. People stick with others from the same ethnic and cultural groups. People without kids don't get involved. We don't do much to reach out to people who aren't in our group.

We are missing a shared pride in our neighborhood. We don't know how to work together while honoring differences.

View #2

It's hard to get good-paying jobs.

Many families are having a tough time with money. There aren't enough good jobs that pay enough to support a family. It's very hard for single parents. Even if there are two parents, both usually have to work to make ends meet. Many parents want to spend more time with their families and less time at work. But, they often think they have no choice.

Parents here don't get enough training to improve their skills and make contacts for better jobs. To get good jobs, people need to rely on their skills and ask the people they know to help them make connections.

View # 3

Family services don't work well for families.

Many families need some kind of help from government and other agencies. There are needs for health care, counseling, financial support, schooling, job training, and drug treatment.

The problem is that services don't really work for families. Usually, the people who work in these agencies don't even live in this neighborhood. They don't treat parents and children as partners. Agencies deal with each issue separately. They don't work together. The family gets divided up and not treated as a whole.

One problem is that parents do not know what services are available or how to use them. Families who need help the most are sometimes the least informed. They aren't sure where to get help, and, sometimes, they are treated rudely.

View #4

Teaching values to children is not left up to parents.

So many people and things can affect a child's views and values. Parents know best how to raise their children. Passing along values needs to start at home.

When schools or the government try to teach values, they get in the way. They shouldn't tell parents how to raise children. Children get confused.

Parents and families need to decide what's right for their children. Values come from the family's culture and religion. These should be taught in the home so that children can deal with peer pressure and learn to make decisions for themselves.

View #5

Parents need to be more responsible.

In our neighborhood, we don't ask parents to do their share in solving family problems. Instead we bring in the police, schools, counselors, and after-school programs to help raise children. When kids get out of hand, we let parents off the hook.

Many parents don't see parenting as their first priority. They allow their children to run around everywhere, out of control. They use the TV for a babysitter. There's no discipline.

If parents need help, they should join a congregation, take part in a support group, or sign their children up for after-school programs. Parents need to use this kind of support to help out – but not as a substitute for doing their job as parents.

Questions to think about

- ◊ Which views are closest to your own? Why? How has your own life helped shape your views?
- ◊ Which views talk about problems that you think might get bigger or smaller? Why?
- ◊ Think about a view you don't agree with. Why might someone else agree with that view?
- ◊ What points of view would you like to add?

Session 2

Part 3: Reality Check

(20 minutes)

When we just look at our problems, we lose sight of what is working well. Let's step back and look at the overall picture.

- ◊ Do you think today's session painted a true picture of our neighborhood? Why or why not?
- ◊ Did today's session make things seem worse than they really are? Better than they really are? About the same?

Part 4: Thinking about our discussion

(20 minutes)

- ◊ What new insights did you get today?
- ◊ What are the main themes you heard?
- ◊ How is our study circle going?
- ◊ What changes would you make next time?

Preparing for Session 3

This week, find out how our neighborhood is dealing with these issues.

- ◊ What is already happening? What new ideas are people talking about?
- ◊ Are other neighborhoods doing things that seem like they could work here?

Session 3 How Can We Make Our Neighborhood a Better Place for Families with Children?

Neighborhoods all across the country are building on their strengths and finding new ways to become better places to live. Today, we will look at some different approaches to make our neighborhood better. Talking about these different approaches will help us at our next meeting when we plan for future activities.

Part 1: Signs of hope in our neighborhood

(20 minutes)

These questions will help us get our discussion started:

- ◊ Look at the notes and past ideas. Is there anything you would add or change?
- ◊ Do you know anything that is already being done to help families in your neighborhood?
- ◊ What gives you hope that things can get better?
- ◊ What strengths can we build on?

Part 2: What approaches will change things for the better?

(80 minutes)

As you look at each approach, consider the following questions.

- ◊ What approach or approaches appeal to you? Why?
- ◊ What is strong and weak about each approach?
- ◊ Are any of these approaches being tried here? Give examples about what you know has worked and failed.
- ◊ What other approaches would you suggest?

FACILITATOR TIPS FOR SESSION 3:

- ◊ Divide the session into three parts. Use the amount of time suggested for each as a guide.
- ◊ Post the notes from earlier sessions for all to see.
- ◊ Remember to take notes so you can refer to them later.
- ◊ First discuss the questions in Part 1.
- ◊ To start Part 2 of this session, ask for volunteers to read each approach on pages 12-17 out loud.
- ◊ After this, ask some of the questions in Part 2.
- ◊ Complete the session by discussing the questions in Part 3 on page 17.

Action Approaches

Approach #1

We should strengthen our community ties.

We need to get to know each other better and rebuild a feeling of community. This is key. After all, the best things that happen for families and children are based in the community.

We need to get to know the neighborhood kids, too. We should help young people build strong relationships with adults who are good role models. If we know our neighbors, we will want to protect their children rather than be protected from them. We will find that we share many of the same hopes and concerns.

What can we do? Ideas for further discussion:

- ◊ Start a neighborhood group.
- ◊ Get a business to sponsor a neighborhood festival.
- ◊ Get together over a meal.
- ◊ Help with a youth sports team or scouts.
- ◊ Join a congregation.
- ◊ Get schools and agencies to use neighborhood volunteers.
- ◊ Take a meal to some new parents.

Approach #2

Families should be allowed to take responsibility for themselves.

Families should look out for their own well being. Parents know what is best for their children – from discipline to education. Agencies need to get out of the way. No social worker or government agency can take the place of parents.

If parents ask for help, we should lend a hand. But first parents must be allowed to try to solve problems on their own without the government interfering. We need government policies that support families and don't work against them.

What can we do? Ideas for further discussion:

◊ Tell schools what we think about their curriculum.

◊ Vote for those who want to cut back on the role of government in our lives.

◊ Teach a children's or teens' class at your church, synagogue, or mosque.

Approach #3

We need to make better use of family services.

The services are there to help families in our neighborhood. They come from public agencies, libraries, schools, religious groups, businesses, and others. We just need to take better advantage of them.

We need to help people get access to these services and make the most of them. These services should be open during hours helpful to families. They should be located in places easy to get to, like on a bus route. Service people should be trained to treat others with respect and to be helpful so that people will feel comfortable about using the services.

What can we do? Ideas for further discussion:

◊ Create a directory of services and get copies to everyone.

◊ Get services to work with each other for referrals.

◊ Create a neighborhood family-resource center.

Approach #4

We should hold agencies and elected officials accountable to families.

Lots of tax dollars are going into programs to help families. We need to make sure programs paid for by the government produce results. That includes programs in schools, police departments, parks and recreation, health care, social services and libraries.

We need to tell these programs what is important to us. They need to listen to us. Before we spend money on new programs, let's make sure the programs we're already paying for are working.

What can we do? Ideas for further discussion:

- ◊ Get your neighbors to meet and talk about big decisions facing the neighborhood.
- ◊ Give a "report card" on neighborhood services to elected officials.
- ◊ Push for laws and rules that support families.
- ◊ Urge elected officials to promote better heath care, safety and support services, and a better local economy.

Approach #5

Local people, groups, and organizations need to work together.

We seem to know how to compete with each other better than to work together. If we could get over our turf wars, we could work together to support families. Until we learn to cooperate better, we will not make much progress. Let's first heal what divides us.

We need to get together and talk about our differences and what we have in common. Let's create partnerships between groups and organizations that do not usually work together.

What can we do? Ideas for further discussion:

- ◊ Have training on how to resolve conflicts.
- ◊ Have training on how to work together, run meetings, and make decisions.
- ◊ Hold more groups like the study circle.
- ◊ Start projects that would bring different groups together.

Approach #6

We need to develop strong leaders in our neighborhood.

We need more people involved, not just the regular faces. Let's expand the circle of people who care for families and are willing to lead. Let's get out of our rut. To make change, leaders need to come from all parts of the neighborhood.

We need to look for leaders from different groups and backgrounds. At the same time, our current leaders need to improve their leadership skills.

What can we do? Ideas for further discussion:

- ◊ Provide new training for current leaders.
- ◊ Have fair and open elections of all leaders.
- ◊ Find and train new adult and youth leaders.
- ◊ Teach people skills on how to sit on nonprofit boards.

Approach #7

We need to help people get good jobs.

None of the things we are talking about will help much unless people have good jobs. Jobs should pay well enough to support a family. People get jobs because of their skills and the people they know.

Parents need better chances for training and hands-on work to improve skills. They need connections that will lead them to jobs. Many parents also need help getting to work or finding child care.

What can we do? Ideas for further discussion:

- ◊ Enroll in or help with programs that offer job training.
- ◊ Help teach English as a Second Language (ESL).
- ◊ Tutor someone for his or her GED.
- ◊ Organize car pools or demand better bus routes.
- ◊ Set up a child-care co-op.
- ◊ Teach people how to write a resume.

Approach # 8

We need to make sure all organizations respect and support families.

Hospitals, libraries, schools, service groups, businesses, and the media – all affect families. They all should focus attention on the "family." Before they start or plan their projects or services, they should ask how they would affect families.

Everyone can do something. A business can offer flextime to employees. A TV station can refuse to show violent programs. It is hard enough to raise a family these days. Families and children need to feel supported and respected by the community.

What can we do? Ideas for further discussion:

- ◊ Call TV stations and ask them to stop showing violent programs.
- ◊ Hold a rally to raise the issues of what our neighborhood needs.
- ◊ Get businesses to show their support for family-friendly policies.
- ◊ Create a "family-friendly" stamp of approval for businesses.

Part 3: Thinking about our discussion

(20 minutes)

Discuss these questions:

- ◊ What new insights did you get?
- ◊ Does our study circle seem to be "leaning" in a certain direction?
- ◊ Do any approaches seem to make sense to most people in our group?
- ◊ Which ideas seem like "what" we need to work on? Which ideas seem like "how" we need to work together?
- ◊ How is the study circle going? Are there things we could do differently?

Session 4

Making a Difference: What Can We Do?

FACILITATOR TIPS FOR SESSION 4:

- ◊ Divide the session into three parts. Use the amount of time suggested for each as a guide. Leave time for the questions in Part 3. It is important for people to talk about what the study circle has meant to them.
- ◊ Post the notes from Session 3.
- ◊ The group is likely to come up with many actions on a variety of levels. Tell people they get to decide on their own actions.
- ◊ To start Part 2 of this session, form three or four groups. Ask people to use the action ideas and examples listed in this session to spark their own thinking. Give the groups time to find three key action ideas.
- ◊ Or, ask people to take a few minutes to look over the action ideas and examples.
- ◊ Use the questions in Part 2 to explore the action ideas.

Making our neighborhoods a better place for families is a big job. Everyone is involved in some way. This session asks, "What can we do?"

Coming together to talk and learn in a study circle is a form of action. To keep talking and get more people involved is a good next step. If some people want to go further, they can form new groups to decide how to take action.

Part 1: Thinking together about how we can make a difference

(45 minutes)

What can you do on your own? With others? Use the action ideas on page 20 as a starting point for your discussion.

Questions to think about

- ◊ Of all the many concerns raised in our study circle, what would you most like to see people work on? Why?
- ◊ What can each of us do to make a difference? Why is this important to you?
- ◊ What can we do if we work together as a group? As a neighborhood? What ideas from other places can we use? Why might they make things better?
- ◊ How can we build on existing efforts to create a better neighborhood? Who's involved? Who else should be involved?

Part 2: What are our priorities?

(55 minutes)

Our study circle will identify the action ideas we think are most practical and useful. We will share our ideas with the other neighborhood or community study circles at the action forum. Then, as a group we will decide which ideas from all the study circles to put into action for long-term change.

Questions to think about:

- ◊ What two or three ideas seem most practical and useful?
- ◊ What would it take to make these ideas become real? What help or support do we need?
- ◊ What resources are already in place to help out? Where is our neighborhood strong?
- ◊ If we don't have enough power to move ahead on one of our ideas, who can help? How can we get them to work with us?
- ◊ What is our next step? Who else should we link up with?
- ◊ If we plan to meet with other study circles, what action ideas do we want to share with them?

Part 3: Reflect on our study circle

(20 minutes)

Questions to think about:

- ◊ What have you learned in this study circle that surprised you?
- ◊ How has this study circle affected the way you think about children, families, and how our neighborhood works?
- ◊ Has this study circle affected what you will do? If so, how?
- ◊ What did you find most valuable about the study circle?
- ◊ What worked well in the discussions? What did not work well? What would you change in the future?

Action Ideas

Here are a number of ideas about how to make our neighborhood better. We can use them to jump-start our thinking. Which fit your views and your neighborhood?

What are simple things that each one of us can do?

- ◊ **Spend time with the children** in your family.
- ◊ **Urge kids to stay in school.** Show how education is important. Help with their homework.
- ◊ **Offer to care** for a neighbor's children.
- ◊ **Meet with other parents** and share concerns.
- ◊ **Go to teacher conferences** and other school meetings. Stay in touch with teachers or join a PTA/PTO.
- ◊ **Read to and talk with children** in your life. After they learn to read, keep reading with them. Talk to them about what they are reading and what they think.

  Example: In South Carolina, a former teacher tutored children in an apartment. So many kids came, she asked the manager to give them the building's clubhouse. She named it "The Homework Club." The teacher trained older kids to help the younger ones. She then started a GED class for adults. There was less crime and graffiti. The Homework Club now has 450 members and five sites in three counties.
- ◊ **Help out at local youth programs,** centers, food banks, and shelters.
- ◊ **Share your skills and talents** with children. Tutor children who need extra help. Help with a sports team or Big Brother/Big Sister program.
- ◊ **Get youth to join faith groups,** choirs, sports, and other activities.
- ◊ **Talk to children** about drugs, sex, racism, dating, and other hard topics.
- ◊ **Get to know the kids** on your block. Learn their names.
- ◊ **Help with peer mentoring** programs.

  Example: In Roanoke, Virginia, high school students join a Teen Outreach Program. Older students help out in a local elementary school, and they also get training in "life skills," like managing anger.
- ◊ **Get to know youth** in your congregation.

  Example: At St. Mark's Parish in Boston, Massachusetts, there is a "one-to-one" program. After Mass each Sunday, everyone is invited to put his or her name in a basket. Then everyone pulls out the name of a stranger. The two people agree to meet with each other for 30 minutes during the week and share their life stories.

What can we do with our neighbors?

◊ **Get more study circles going** or expand yours.

◊ **Help out** at the local community or day-care center.

Example: In the Vine City neighborhood of Atlanta, Georgia, volunteers staff the Greater Vine City Opportunities Program. They teach kids how to make crafts and how to market and sell their products. They get funds from the Metropolitan Atlanta Community Foundation.

◊ **Take an interest in youth** in your neighborhood. Let them know you care.

Example: In Kansas City, Missouri, some neighborhoods have "block leaders." These are moms and dads who watch out for young people wandering the streets. They offer youth a safe place, a snack, cooking classes, and even wake-up calls. They have started gardens, painted over graffiti, and bought food for seniors who can't leave their homes.

◊ **Find ways to improve child care** in your community.

Example: In Raleigh, North Carolina, people worked with Habitat for Humanity to fix up a child-care center. The new Rising Star Child Care Center helps children and provides jobs. The center is keeping its fees low so that all families can take part.

Example: In Atlanta, Georgia, people created the Inn for Children, which is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The center offers child care, resources for parents, education, counseling, immunizations, and a "Get Well" place for mildly ill children.

Example: In Denver, Colorado, the 30-year-old Capitol Heights Babysitting Co-op has parents swapping babysitting. Parents use cards for payment to show each 15 minutes of babysitting.

◊ **Hold seminars and support groups** for parents.

Example: In San Antonio, Texas, a first-grade teacher started Avance' for immigrant mothers and little children. There is now training for parents, a nursery, and skill classes for adults. 90 percent of Avance' kids graduate high school. 50 percent go to college. Now the program has spread throughout Texas.

◊ **Start an arts project** with photography, art, music, festivals, murals, and theater.

Example: In Boston, Massachusetts, a neighborhood group sponsored the "Unity Through Diversity Mural." The mural was created and painted by young people. It is now a landmark.

◊ Fight neighborhood crime.

Example: In Delray Beach, Florida, there are citizen patrols. The police train neighbors. These patrols have cell phones and radios and report odd behavior to the police. Since these patrols started, there has been a 75 percent drop in crime.

Example: In Omaha, Nebraska, black fathers formed MAD DADS (Men Against Destruction – Defending Against Drugs and Social Disorder). They patrol areas on weekends. They help with neighborhood cleanups and gun buyback programs. They support neighborhood youth events and counsel youth. Today there are 32 official chapters of MAD DADS across the country.

◊ Address race issues in schools.

Example: A study circle in Sioux City, Iowa, wondered if school curricula included enough choices to provide diversity. They worked with the school to change the course offerings.

◊ Mentor young people.

Example: In Fort Wayne, Indiana, employers had a hard time finding skilled and educated workers. They wanted to improve local education. They started Study Connection, a tutoring program that pairs adults with school children. The adults are role models and mentors. They commit to one hour a week for one year.

◊ Organize fun neighborhood activities.

Example: On the Fourth of July, children in Beverly, Massachusetts, decorate their trikes and bikes and have a big parade. The event draws lots of people.

Example: In Denver, Colorado, citizens wanted the police, City Hall, and neighbors of Capitol Hill to work together better. At a local junior high school, the police sponsored a People's Fair. The first year, 2,000 people came. Then the neighborhood groups took it over. Now 700 volunteers and 300,000 people come. It is now held in a local park. There are arts and crafts, music and booths with information about services for families. $550,000 has been raised and given back to neighborhoods through grants.

◊ Organize cleanup projects.

Example: In San Diego, California, citizens in the Barrio Logan identified 23 "graffiti centers." They planted and grew ivy vines over them. Now there is no need to repaint.

Example: Citizens of Benning Heights in Washington, D.C., painted over the graffiti that had marked their neighborhood as a combat zone for gangs.

◊ Organize nonviolent protests.

Example: In Love Canal, New York, women organized 500 families to form the Love Canal Homeowners Committee. The government had failed to clean up toxic waste. After protests and meetings, the government agreed to pay for the houses of anyone wishing to move.

Example: In Afton, North Carolina, citizens started the Warren County Citizens Concerned about PCB's. They wanted to stop the dumping of toxic soil in their community by the EPA. After meetings in churches, they blocked trucks from carrying the toxic soil. Hundreds of women, mostly African-Americans, allowed themselves to be

arrested and jailed. The media took notice. Finally the EPA reduced the toxic waste dump. These events got the Congress to study the dumping of toxic waste. They wrote a book called *Toxic Wastes and Race in the U.S.*

◊ **Work with public officials** to get more input on public decisions.

Example: In Fremont, California, public officials started "I Have An Idea." Citizens' ideas were included in the city's five-year Capital Improvement Plan through surveys and the media. As a result, 42 new projects were started.

◊ **Work with neighborhoods next to yours.**

Example: In Denver, Colorado, several neighborhoods worked together to stop two-way streets from being turned into one-way streets. It would have meant more traffic. As a result of this victory, the Capitol Hill United Neighbors (CHUN) was started to keep looking after neighborhoods. Today each neighborhood elects someone to be on the board of CHUN. CHUN was able to get a new police district for the area.

CHUN also started CHUN-IF (Improvement Fund). The group acts as a fiscal agent (using its own 501(c)3 status) for other nonprofits that can't legally get grants. For example, Urban Peak, a program for runaway youth, used CHUN-IF ten years ago to get started. Now it is a large and well funded not-for-profit group.

What can schools churches, agencies, and other groups do?

◊ **Have groups work together creatively.**

Example: In Mercer County, New Jersey, state agencies and a local children's home started Operation Fatherhood. It works with dads who don't have custody of their children. They offer job training and placement, counseling and support groups.

Example: Several churches in Sacramento, California, started the Adopt a Child Abuse Caseworker program to help stop child abuse. This program links concerned citizens with families in need. Now social workers can call on people to help out where federal, state, and local assistance programs can't.

◊ **Support youth leaders.**

Example: In New Haven, Connecticut, the police started a Board of Young Adult Police Commissioners. The board gives youth a voice with the police. The board stopped metal detectors going into the schools. Instead it started peer mediation to stop conflicts from getting violent. The board was able to expand alcohol and drug treatment programs for youth. It raised $2,000 for a hospice for young people who suffer from AIDS.

Example: The mayor of Birmingham, Alabama, got charges dropped against students arrested for marching in housing projects to promote a "Peace in the Streets" rap concert. The concert was part of a project to stop a waste-transfer station in the neighborhood. It had been sponsored by the City Council in honor of Martin Luther King's birthday.

◊ **Look at health-care needs** in the community.

Example: In Brooklyn, New York, the Sunset Park Family Center Network works with medical centers in 11 schools. It offers preventive care to 11,000 children whether they can pay or not. It also helps immigrant families. Its low-cost day-care services support welfare-to-work programs.

Example: The Abbottsford and Schuylkill Falls Community Health Centers serve two public-housing communities in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Nurses work with Tenant Council members to focus on health and social problems. They offer prenatal care, violence prevention, support for grandparents raising children, and training on diabetes, asthma, and stopping smoking. They have 12-step programs for drugs, alcohol, and overeating. They transport people to other services.

Example: Each year in Tucson, Arizona, a two-day C.A.R.E (Children's Assistance and Resource Event) Fair is held at a local high school. At the fair, people can get health screening and bus passes. They also learn about child-support services, food stamps, housing, and more. In 1998 more than 10,000 people came to the fair.

Example: In Des Moines, Iowa, the Young Moms East project works out of donated church space. A small staff offers health and social services to young mothers. They see health care as it relates to counseling, peer support, and having clothes and baby things.

◊ **Connect schools with the community.**

Example: School District Four in New York City has a lively after-school program. It includes a seven-week summer camp. It offers tutoring and games for all ages.

Example: The Arizona At-Risk Pilot Project offers ESL classes for parents who can't speak English. Now, more parents come to meetings. Also, teachers and parents are talking with each other better.

◊ **Help youth get jobs.**

Example: In Boston, Massachusetts, YouthBuild Boston offers 18-24 year olds who never finished high school a one-year program. Young adults get their GED and get training in construction at the same time. They rebuild old buildings for low-income people to live in. Each student gets $6,000 to work in the project.

Example: In the Benning Heights public housing project in Washington, D.C., youth are hired and trained to do landscaping and light construction. Citizens, police, the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, and the Department of Public Housing work together. The project employs youth and reduces crime, gangs, and drug use.

◊ **Get parents and students to work together in school.**

Example: Public School 146 in East Harlem, New York, hosts Family Math Night. Parents and students come to learn math and do homework together.

◊ **Start a community center for the neighborhood.**

Example: In Cabot, Vermont, a high school and local businesses built a state-of-the-art science lab both to make money and to educate. The school holds adult-education classes at night and added a health clinic. Parents volunteer in after-school activities. Voters approved a bond issue giving money to fix up the building.

Example: In Chattanooga, Tennessee, citizens, city and school officials, and business people started the Westside Community Development Corp. WCDC got money from the Junior League and local foundations to open a resource center in an old school. It offers job training, adult education, how to run a small business, youth clubs, counseling and senior programs. The school's kitchen has its first small business, HomeGirls Catering.

◊ **Expand citizen input on school-district issues.**

Example: The Minneapolis Public Schools used study circles to get parents and citizens to make decisions about school reform. The study circles looked at three options. This helped the school district make better plans for the future.

◊ **Address teen pregnancy.**

Example: The Girls Club of Santa Barbara, California, started the Mother/Daughter Choices Program to help middle-school girls talk with their moms. It helps prevent pregnancy by having girls focus on making good decisions and work on setting goals.

Example: In Omaha, Nebraska, Creighton University and several local child-health clinics started PEACH – Prenatal and Early Childhood Home Visitation. PEACH sends nurses into the home to support and educate poor teenagers who are pregnant with their first child. This and other programs in the United States have reduced by a third the number of women having a second child. It also helps to reduce crime, and drug and alcohol use among young mothers.

Tips for Study Circle Facilitators

A study circle facilitator does not need to be an expert on the topic being discussed. But the facilitator should be the best prepared for the discussion. This means ...

- ◊ understanding the goals of the study circle,
- ◊ being familiar with the subject,
- ◊ thinking ahead of time about how the discussion might go,
- ◊ and preparing questions to help the group consider the subject.

Several of the sessions in this guide offer more choices for discussion than you can cover in a two-hour session. Choose the options that you think will be most interesting to your group. (You may want to consider having extra meetings.) If you are well prepared, it will make it easier for you to give your full attention to how the group is acting and interacting, and to what individuals in the group are saying.

Stay neutral!

The most important thing to remember is that, as a facilitator, you should not share your personal views or try to push your own agenda on the issue. You are there to serve the discussion, not to join it.

- ◊ Set a relaxed and open tone.
- ◊ Welcome everyone and create a friendly and relaxed atmosphere.
- ◊ Well-placed humor is usually appreciated.

Explain the purpose of the study circle, and help the group set ground rules.

At the beginning of the study circle, remind everyone that the purpose of the study circle is to work with one another to look at the issue in a democratic way. Also remind them that your role as leader is to remain neutral, keep the discussion focused, and guide the conversation according to the ground rules.

Start with the basic ground rules listed on page 6, then ask participants to add their own ideas.

Stay aware of and assist the group process.

- ◊ Always use your "third eye." You are not only helping to keep the group focused on the content of the discussion, but you will be keeping track of how the participants are communicating with each other – who has spoken, who hasn't spoken, and whose points haven't yet received a fair hearing.
- ◊ Consider splitting up into smaller groups to examine a variety of viewpoints or to give people a chance to talk more easily about their personal connection to the issue.
- ◊ Try not to interfere with the discussion unless you have to. Don't allow the group to turn to you for the answers.

◊ Resist the urge to speak after each comment or answer every question. Allow participants to respond directly to each other. The most effective leaders often say little, but are constantly thinking about how to move the discussion forward.

◊ Once in a while, ask participants to sum up the most important points that have come out in the discussion.

◊ Don't be afraid of silence! People sometimes need time to think before they respond. If silence feels awkward to you, try counting silently to ten before you rephrase the question. This will give people time to collect their thoughts.

◊ Don't let anyone take over the conversation; try to involve everyone.

◊ Remember that a study circle is not a debate, but a group dialogue. If participants forget this, don't hesitate to ask the group to help re-establish the ground rules.

◊ Keep careful track of time!

Help the group look at various points of view.

◊ Make it clear to participants that you will never take sides on the issue; your role as a facilitator is to be fair and act neutral.

◊ Use these written materials to help participants consider a wide range of views. Rely on the guide rather than presenting something as your idea. Referring to the guide helps you stay neutral. You might ask participants to consider a point of view that hasn't come up in the discussion. Ask the group to think about the advantages and disadvantages of different ways of looking at an issue or solving a problem.

◊ Ask participants to think about the concerns and values that underlie their beliefs.

◊ Don't allow the group to focus on just one particular personal experience or anecdote.

◊ Help participants to identify common ground, but don't try to force agreement.

Ask open-ended questions that don't lend themselves to easy answers.

Open-ended questions are questions that can't be answered with a quick "yes or no." They push people to think about why they believe what they do. Open-ended questions also encourage people to look for connections between different ideas.

Get familiar with the following questions. They are a great resource during any study circle.

General questions:

- ◊ What seems to be the key point here?
- ◊ Do you agree with that? Why?
- ◊ What do other people think of this idea?
- ◊ What would be a strong case against what you just said?
- ◊ Have you had any experiences with this that you can share with the group?
- ◊ Could you help us understand the reasons behind your opinion?
- ◊ What do you think is really going on here? Why is that important?
- ◊ How might others see this issue?
- ◊ Do you think others in the group see this the way you do? Why?
- ◊ How does this make you feel?

Questions to use when there is disagreement:

- ◊ What do you think he is saying?
- ◊ What bothers you most about this?
- ◊ What is at the heart of the disagreement?
- ◊ How does this make you feel?
- ◊ What experiences or beliefs might lead a reasonable person to support that point of view?
- ◊ What do you think is really important to people who hold that opinion?
- ◊ What is blocking the discussion?
- ◊ What might you be willing to give up in order to come to some agreement?
- ◊ What don't you agree with?
- ◊ What do you find most convincing about that point of view?
- ◊ What is it about that position that you just cannot live with?
- ◊ Could you say more about what you think?
- ◊ What makes this so hard?
- ◊ What have we missed that we need to talk about?

Questions to use when people are feeling hopeless:

- ◊ Say a little about how that makes you feel.
- ◊ Is there any hope?
- ◊ Can the problems that you are talking about be solved in any way? How?

Closing questions:

- ◊ What are the key points of agreement and disagreement about today's session?
- ◊ What have you heard today that has made you think, or has touched you in some way?

Be aware of the dynamics of cross-cultural communication

- ◊ Awareness of cross-cultural dynamics is important in a study circle setting. This is especially true when issues of race and ethnicity are a part of the conversation.
- ◊ Even though some of the conversation may revolve around differences, set a tone of unity in the group. While our differences may separate us on some matters, we have enough in common as human beings to allow us to talk together in a constructive way.
- ◊ Facilitating in pairs is often helpful in study circles. To help establish unity, the co-facilitators could be a man and a woman, a white person and a person of color, an adult and a young person, a manager and a clerical assistant. Also, a newly trained facilitator is likely to learn a lot from an experienced facilitator who has first-hand knowledge about how cross-cultural dynamics can work in a study circle.
- ◊ Sensitivity, empathy, and familiarity with people of different backgrounds are important qualities for the facilitator. If you have not had the opportunity to spend time with all kinds of people, get involved in a community program that gives you that opportunity and helps you understand cross-cultural dynamics.
- ◊ Help people to appreciate and respect their own and others' communication styles. People's cultural backgrounds affect the ways in which they communicate. For example, in some cultures people are encouraged to take charge and say exactly what they think, while in other cultures, people are expected to be more reserved and keep their thoughts to themselves. Some cultures value listening more than speaking. In others, taking a stand is of utmost importance. Help group members to realize there is more than one good way to communicate. Understanding one another takes practice! Your leadership should show that each person has an important and unique contribution to make to the group.

Tips for Facilitators

◊ Help the participants understand that cultural labels, or stereotypes, are usually unfair.

◊ Remind the group, if necessary, that no one can represent his or her entire culture. Each person's experiences, as an individual and as a member of a group, are unique and OK.

◊ Encourage group members to think about their own experiences as they try to identify with people who have been victims of discrimination – in the workplace or elsewhere. Many people have had experiences that make this discussion a very personal issue. Others, particularly those who are usually in the majority, may not have thought as much about their own culture and its effects on their lives. It might help to encourage people to think about times in their own lives when they have been treated unfairly. Be careful not to equate the experiences. To support study circle participants who tell how they have been mistreated, be sure to explain that you respect their feelings and are trying to help all the members of the group understand. Remind people that no one can know exactly what it feels like to be in another person's shoes.

◊ Encourage group members to talk about their own experiences and cultures, rather than other people's. This way, they will be less likely to make false generalizations about other cultures. Also, listening to others tell about their own experiences breaks down stereotypes and helps people understand one another.

Close with a summary of the discussion – provide time for evaluation, and set the stage for the next meeting

◊ Give participants a chance to talk about the most important thing they got out of the discussion. You may wish to ask participants to share any new ideas or thoughts they've had as a result of the discussion.

◊ If you will be meeting again, remind the group of the readings and subject for the next session.

◊ If the groups are meeting because they hope to have an impact on community decision making, be sure to document the content of the discussions. In some study circles, participants record common concerns and points of agreement and disagreement, as well as ideas for action steps.

◊ After the last session, provide some time for the group to do a written evaluation. This allows participants to comment on the process and give feedback to the facilitator.

◊ Thank everyone for his and her contributions!

How to Organize Study Circles in Your Neighborhood

If you want to get more people involved in efforts to improve neighborhoods for families with children, this guide can help you. By organizing study circles throughout your neighborhood, you can give people an important chance to share their concerns and ideas, form new relationships, and take action to solve problems.

There are several important things to remember.

- ◊ First, share the work. Ask for help from other neighbors.
- ◊ Second, make it clear that all different viewpoints and backgrounds will be respected in the study circles.
- ◊ Third, make sure that people understand that this project will help people solve problems in the community, not just talk about them.

Call the Study Circles Resource Center for more detailed advice on the following steps:

1. **Get a few people to help you.** Single out a few people you know well, have worked with before, and who would be excited about this project.
2. **Hold a pilot study circle.** Working together, make a list of 10 or 12 people who could help move this project forward. Give them a personal invitation to a pilot study circle, and try out one or two of the sessions. (Find someone who can serve as a neutral facilitator for that meeting. See "Tips for Study Circle Facilitators" on pages 26-30.) At the end, ask the participants what they think of the process, and how to make study circles happen in your neighborhood.
3. **Make a list of groups and organizations in your neighborhood.** To involve a large number of people, you need to tap into as many groups and organizations as you can. Make a list of all the schools, faith groups, businesses, clubs, nonprofits, libraries, tenants' associations, scout troops, social-service agencies and other groups in the neighborhood. Also list key outsiders who work closely with the neighborhood, including police officers, public officials, and other government employees.
4. **Hold another pilot study circle, with representatives from different organizations.** Invite people from some of these organizations to another pilot circle. (Personal invitations work best.) If you have more than 12 people, hold more than one circle. Try for a good mix of people in each circle.
5. **Form a study circle working group.** Ask all the people who've been involved so far to join the working group. Make sure this group represents all the different kinds of people living in the neighborhood. Split the working groups into twos and threes to start on the following tasks:

a. **Plan the kickoff.** This is a large meeting that takes place just before the study circles begin to announce the project to the whole neighborhood. Invite one or two speakers who can describe the study circles and inspire people to take part. Provide refreshments, and leave some time for people to socialize and sign up.

b. **Recruit and train facilitators.** If you can, find some people who are skilled at facilitating groups. Also, invite people who have the personality to be good facilitators – good listeners often make good facilitators. Give them information about study circle facilitation (you can hand out copies of the tips on pages 26-30), and schedule a training. Make sure people understand the main rule: Facilitators are neutral, and must keep their opinions to themselves.

c. **Find sites and handle other details.** Arrange for study circles to meet in neutral locations like schools, libraries, churches, firehouses, and businesses. If you can, provide child care, transportation, or other services that will help people take part. If possible, find volunteers to serve as recorders for the groups.

d. **Recruit people to join the study circles.** Remember, personal invitations work best. Get everyone in the working group to recruit people from their organization or circle of friends. Go door to door. Create flyers and signup sheets to pass out in neighborhoods. Get your information into local newsletters, church bulletins, and newspapers. Think of other ways to get the word out.

e. **Plan for action.** Invite study circle participants to a large meeting, or action forum, at the end of a round of study circles. Use the records from each group to identify the main areas of concern. At the forum, allow enough time for someone from each study circle to give a quick summary of the group's ideas (no more than five minutes each). Encourage people to sign up for action groups. Give the action groups some time to get acquainted and begin planning. Close the meeting with a speaker who will congratulate everyone on his or her efforts. Make sure there is food, and time for socializing. Think about how to keep the action groups going after the forum.

6. **Hold the kickoff meeting.** Try to get the local newspaper to cover the kickoff.

STUDY CIRCLES BEGIN

7. **Support the study circles.** Bring the facilitators together for a meeting so they can compare notes on how their groups are going. Start new study circles for people who are joining late. Collect the records from each circle to give you a sense of the discussions and help you document the process.

STUDY CIRCLES END (for now)

8. **Hold the action forum.** This is a chance to celebrate what your neighborhood has done, and to move from talk to action.
9. **Keep the momentum going.** Keep track of the action groups to see how they're doing. Try to get local media to cover the action efforts. Work with people who want to get a new round of study circles going.
10. **Pause and reflect on what you've learned, and start planning the next round.** Get the working group together, and talk about how things went. Record (and applaud!) your achievements, and look for ways to make the program stronger. Check in with SCRC. Let us know the outcomes of your program, so we can use them to inspire other programs. Give feedback and encouragement to volunteers. Use what you learned to plan for the future. Try to expand your working group so that your study circle program will grow and you can help build a stronger community.

Keys to Organizing Study Circles on Families and Children

Thoughtful organizing of a study circle program leads to a successful program. Experience has taught us that certain early decisions and actions are important to success. Here are some questions to consider. For more detailed information, please contact the Study Circles Resource Center.

Why are you organizing study circles on this issue?

Considering this question will help you understand the nature and scope of the challenge facing your neighborhood. Then, you can talk about whether and how study circles will help you get to the root of the matter.

What are the goals of the program?

Set clear goals from the outset. Being clear about your goals is important because it makes it easier for you to explain why people should join the working group, and to inspire people to join the circles. It also makes it much easier to plan a strategy for reaching those goals.

Who should participate?

Successful programs have a diverse mix of participants from all parts of the neighborhood. For this issue, you also need "buy-in" from city leaders, and the city departments that serve the neighborhood. Consider whose voices you need to hear, and whose support you need to make changes in the neighborhood.

How will you recruit the participants?

Think about why people would want to take part, and what would keep them from participating. Then decide what to say to persuade them, and how to get your message across.

An example

Here's how one working group began planning its program. Keep in mind – your neighborhood might have very different answers to these questions.

What are the goals of the program?

The primary goal is to connect neighborhood people to each other and to bigger institutions. Another goal is to give people a way to make changes on the issues that affect them most closely. More productive, long-term relationships between people and institutions might lead to positive changes in procedures and policies in agencies, organizations, and city government.

Why are study circles the right tool for this issue?

The neighborhood wants the people who live here to build better relationships with each other and with the institutions that serve them.

Who should participate?

To accomplish its goals, the program must include a diverse group of neighborhood residents and leaders, police, school and city officials, business leaders from the neighborhood, young people, and agency workers.

How will you recruit the participants?

Representatives from each of these groups will form a study circle working group. Possible partners could include: representatives of the neighborhood association, the child care center, the police department, City Hall, social services, the parole office, the ministerial alliance, youth organizations, the community center, the neighborhood business association, and the schools. The working group should brainstorm the best ways to recruit participants from all over the community.

Other questions for the study circle working group to consider:

Will the working group go through pilot circles?

Taking part in a pilot study circle will help build trust within the working group, and help members to be more effective when they start recruiting participants for the study circles.

Who will coordinate the project?

Recruiting people from all parts of the neighborhood, training facilitators, and organizing the circles takes a lot of work. It's important to find a coordinator who is good at managing details and can devote enough time to the project.

Who will facilitate the circles?

Ideally, there should be two facilitators for each circle. The facilitators must be able to gain the trust of all the participants. Generally, people in positions of authority should not facilitate, so it's important to talk about whether it would be fair to all concerned before asking government or agency officials to act as facilitators.

Where should the circles be held?

The circles should be held in places where everyone feels comfortable. Public buildings like police or fire stations, schools, or places of worship often are centrally located and accessible.

What should the study circles look like?

How many neighborhood people, agency workers or city leaders should there be in each circle? It's important to talk about how to create "balanced" study circles where all groups will be well represented.

How will you reach people who are the hardest to recruit?

To meet your goals, it is important to include people who are often left out. Look for trusted community leaders who can reach them. You could hold a sample study circle in their "territory" to give people a chance to try out the process.

Will young people and adults participate together?

If one of the goals is to build trust between young people and adults, then they need to be in groups together. This can be tricky. Parents may worry about having their children in the circles, and some young people may not feel comfortable speaking up in the groups. In some neighborhoods, organizers make sure that there are at least two or three young people in a group. Sometimes, the young people discuss the material together before joining one of the neighborhood study circles.

What will happen after the dialogue?

People will not want to participate if they think the program is just a public relations tool. It's important to have "buy in" from city leaders, so that people know that their action ideas will be listened to.

Resources for Further Action and Discussion

Community Building

Alliance for National Renewal
National Civic League
1445 Market Street, Suite 300
Denver, CO 80202-1728
Phone: 303-571-4343
Web site: www.ncl.org/anr
A network of more than 150 community-building organizations working to address the serious issues facing America and its communities. Publishes the *Community Resource Manual*, and a newsletter called *The Kitchen Table*.

Asset-Based Community Development Institute
Institute for Policy Research
Northwestern University
2040 Sheridan Road
Evanston, IL 60208-4100
Phone: 847-491-8711
Fax: 847-467-4140
Web site: http://www.nwu.edu/IPR/abcd.html
Established in 1995, the institute is built upon three decades of community development research by John Kretzmann and John L. McKnight. Spreads its findings on capacity-building community development through interactions with community builders, and by producing practical resources and tools for community builders to identify, nurture, and mobilize neighborhood assets. Offers numerous publications about building community, and finding and mobilizing community assets.

Building Healthier Communities
McAuley Institute
8300 Colesville Road, Suite 310
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Phone: 301-588-8110
Fax: 301-588-8154
Web site: www.bhconline.org
A national advocacy, education and community-building initiative that works to create partnerships among organizations involved in housing, health care, education, economic development, and human services. Publishes the newsletter *Building Healthier Communities* three times a year.

Center for Neighborhood Technology
2125 West North Avenue
Chicago, IL 60647
Phone: 773-278-4800
Web site: www.cnt.org
Publishes the bimonthly magazine, *The Neighborhood Works*, which covers community organizing and development in low- and middle-income neighborhoods around issues of housing, energy, environment, economic, and community development, and transportation.

Civic Practices Network
Brandeis University
Web site: www.cpn.org
Provides an online journal of tools, stories, and "best practices" of community empowerment and civic renewal.

Housing

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
451 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20410
Phone: 202-708-1112
Web site: www.hud.gov
Maintains local offices in all fifty states, in addition to a user-friendly "store-front" office in Washington, D.C. Provides information on a variety of subjects – from buying a home and finding housing, to building a community center, or opening a business.

Habitat for Humanity International
121 Habitat Street
Americus, GA 31709
Phone: 229-924-6935, ext. 2551 or 2552
Web site: www.habitat.org
A nonprofit, Christian housing ministry dedicated to eliminating substandard housing and homelessness. Builds and rehabilitates houses with the help of the homeowner (partner) families and volunteer labor. Habitat houses are sold to partner families at no profit, and financed with no-interest loans that are recycled into a revolving loan fund.

Resources...

Mentoring

Big Brothers/Big Sisters
230 North Thirteenth Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Phone: 215-567-7000
Fax: 215-567-0394
Web site: www.bbbsa.org
Matches children in need with caring adult mentors. Research shows that children with Big Brothers and Big Sisters are less likely to use drugs and alcohol, skip school, and exhibit violent behavior. Provides positive mentoring relationships for young people in hundreds of communities in all 50 states. There are currently 140,000 active adult participants nationwide.

International Telementoring Center
3919 Benthaven Drive
Fort Collins, CO 80526
Phone: 970-491-1700
Fax: 970-491-2005
Web site: www.telementor.org
A program at the Center for Science, Mathematics & Technology Education at the Colorado State University that facilitates electronic mentoring relationships between professional adults and students worldwide. By spending about 30-45 minutes per week communicating via e-mail, adult mentors can share their experience and expertise, helping students achieve academic excellence in math and science, improve communication skills, and explore career and educational futures. Telementoring is a process that combines the proven practice of mentoring with the speed and ease of electronic communication, enabling busy professionals to make significant contributions to the academic lives of students.

America's Promise – The Alliance for Youth
909 North Washington Street, Suite 400
Alexandria, VA 22314-1556
Phone: 703-684-4500
Fax: 703-535-3900
Web site: www.americaspromise.org
Dedicated to mobilizing individuals, groups and organizations from every part of American life, to build and strengthen the character and competence of youth. Information on mentoring and other volunteer activities that individuals and groups can do to support youth.

National Mentoring Partnership
1400 I Street, NW, Suite 850
Washington DC 20005
Phone: 202-729-4345
Fax: 202-729-4341
Web site: www.mentoring.org
Advocate for the expansion of mentoring, and a resource for mentors and mentoring initiatives nationwide.

Fighting and Preventing Crime

National Association of Town Watch
7 Wynnwood Road, Suite 215
P.O. Box 303
Wynnwood, PA 19096
Phone: 610-649-7055
Web site: www.nationaltownwatch.org
Nonprofit organization dedicated to the development and promotion of organized, law-enforcement-affiliated crime- and drug-prevention programs. Sponsors the annual "National Night Out" (NNO) program to promote community involvement in crime- and drug-prevention activities, strengthen police-community relations, and encourage neighborhood camaraderie as part of the fight for safer streets.

National Crime Prevention Council
1000 Connecticut Avenue, NW, 13th Floor
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202-466-6272
Web site: www.ncpc.org
A private, nonprofit organization whose mission is to prevent crime and build safer, more caring communities. Offers a variety of publications and resources for communities, including a detailed list of 350 tested methods to prevent crime.

Community Relations Service
U.S. Department of Justice
600 E Street, NW, Suite 2000
Washington, DC 20530
Phone: 202-305-2935
Web site: www.usdoj.gov/cops
Resource on community policing. Arm of the U.S. Department of Justice, a specialized federal conciliation service available to state and local officials to help resolve and prevent racial and ethnic conflict, violence and civil disorders. CRS helps local officials and residents find solutions when conflict and violence threaten community stability and well being.

Upper Midwest Community Policing Institute
Provides a list of regional community policing organizations.
Web site: www.umcpi.org/websites.html

Resources...

Community Organizing

Center for Community Change
1000 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20007
Phone: 202-342-0567
Fax: 202-333-5462

160 Sansome Street, 7th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94104
Phone: 415-982-0346
Web site: www.communitychange.org
Helps poor people to improve their communities and change policies and institutions that affect their lives by developing their own strong organizations. For almost 30 years, CCC has been nationally recognized for its work helping people build organizations and create better communities and policies. The Center's staff includes many of the nation's leading experts on community development, community organizing, leadership training, coalition building, housing, welfare reform, jobs, economic development, banking and reinvestment, and Native American issues.

Community Organization & Family Issues (COFI)
954 West Washington Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60607
Phone: 312-226-5141
Provides a family-focused community-organizing model for strengthening parent voices at the local neighborhood level and at broader policy levels.

National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise
1424 Sixteenth Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202-518-6500
Web site: www.ncne.com
A research and advocacy organization focused on empowering low-income Americans. Works with neighborhood organizations to reduce crime and violence, restore families, create economic opportunity, and revitalize low-income communities. Identifies positive neighborhood agents and supports these movements through training, technical assistance, and links to outside support sources.

National Neighborhood Coalition
1875 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20009-5728
Phone: 202-986-2096
An information and education clearinghouse on national public policies and federal programs that affect inner-city neighborhoods. Tracks federal legislation on neighborhood issues and conducts outreach to the Executive Branch and Congress. Sponsors monthly information forums and publishes a newsletter.

NeighborWorks Net
1325 G Street, NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005-3100
Phone: 202-220-2300
Fax: 202-376-2600
Web site: www.nw.org
Provides resources with information relating to a host of community-revitalization efforts from across the country. Web site is a function of the neighborhood revitalization and educational services offered by Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, Neighborhood Housing Services of America, and a national network of public and private partnerships.

Equality

National Urban League
120 Wall Street
New York, NY 10005
Phone: 212-558-5311 or 212-588-5300
Web site: www.nul.org
National, nonprofit, nonpartisan, community-based movement dedicated to helping African-Americans attain social and economic equality.

Community Fundraising

The United Way of America
701 North Fairfax Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-2045
Phone: 800-892-2797
Web site: www.unitedway.org
Comprising 1,300 local affiliates that provide fundraising for community organizations and programs. Each United Way is supported by private funds and volunteer efforts. The funds are directed to a variety of programs and services that meet the specific needs of each community and focus on issues such as health care, drug abuse and prevention, literacy, poverty, and homelessness.

The Grantsmanship Center
Web site: www.tgci.com/resources/foundations/community/index.html
Provides a list of community foundations by state. Community foundations are nonprofit, tax-exempt, publicly supported, grantmaking organizations. These foundations are public charities, since they develop broad support from many unrelated donors with a wide range of charitable interests in a specific community. A community foundation has an independent board that is broadly representative of the public interest and it maintains a diverse grants program that is not limited in scope. In addition to making grants, these foundations often play a leadership role in their communities, serve as a resource for grant information and broker training, and provide technical assistance for local nonprofits.

Resources ...

Support for Families

Child and Family Policy Center
218 Sixth Avenue, Suite 1021 Fleming Building
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401
Phone: 515-280-9027
Fax: 515-244-8977
Web site: www.cfpciowa.org
Operates the publication clearinghouse and technical assistance resource network of the National Center for Service Integration. Provides technical assistance and support to construct more comprehensive, community-based systems of support to families and children.

Family Research Council
801 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: 202-292-2100
Fax: 202-393-2134
Web site: www.frc.org
Reaffirms and promotes nationally, and particularly in Washington, D.C., the traditional family unit and the Judeo-Christian value system upon which it is built. The Council does this through advocacy, information and education.

Family Resource Coalition of America
20 North Wacker Drive, Suite 1100
Chicago, IL 60606
Phone: 312-338-0900
Fax: 312-338-1522
E-mail: frca@frca.org
Web site: www.frca.org
Works to bring about a completely new societal response to children, youth, and their families. Builds networks, produces resources, advocates for public policy, provides consulting services, and gathers knowledge to help the family-support movement grow. FRCA is also a resource for communities wishing to start a family resource center.

Job Training

The U.S. Office of Apprenticeship Training, Employer and Labor Services
Web site: www.doleta.gov/bat/
An excellent place to start for information about offering apprenticeships or being an apprentice. Every state has a local office.

Focusing on Kids

Search Institute
700 South Third Street, Suite 210
Minneapolis, MN 55415-1138
Phone: 612-376-8955
Toll Free: 1-800-888-7828
Fax: 612-376-8956
E-mail for general information: si@search-institute.org
Web site: www.search-institute.org
An independent, nonprofit, nonsectarian organization whose mission is to advance the well being of adolescents and children by generating knowledge and promoting its application. Conducts research and evaluation, develops publications and practical tools, and provides training and technical assistance.

Child-Friendly Initiative
184 Bocana Street
San Francisco, CA 94110
Phone: 1-800-500-5234
Web site: www.childfriendly.org
A nonprofit organization devoted to making commercial, institutional, governmental, and real-world spaces friendly to children. Encourages the development of active and healthy children by promoting an understanding of children's needs and designing public and private spaces to ensure these needs are met.

Kids Count Data Book
Web site: www.aecf.org/kidscount/kc1999/
KIDS COUNT, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United States. All 1999 KIDS COUNT data is now available from an easy-to-use, powerful online database that allows you to generate custom graphs, maps, ranked lists, and state-by-state profiles.

The Children's Partnership
P.O. Box 40278
Austin, TX 78704
Web site: www.childrenspartnership.com
This nonprofit, nonpartisan organization informs leaders and the public about the needs of American children. The site includes a newsletter and lists of publications that may be downloaded.

Resources

Community-built Playgrounds

Learning Structures
97 High Street
Somersworth, NH 03878
Phone: 1-800-533-1553 or 603-692-2227.
Web site: www.learningstructures.com/index.html
A company that offers comprehensive services to communities wanting to build a community-built playground. All-inclusive services cover planning, design, construction supervision and budget management. Each project is custom designed to fit the community's site and needs.

KaBOOM!
2213 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
Phone: 202-659-0215
Fax: 202-659-0210
Web site: www.kaboom.org
This national nonprofit organization helps communities set up the partnerships needed to create a community-built playground. By the end of the year 2000, KaBOOM! will build, renovate or provide technical assistance to develop 1,000 community-built playgrounds. This campaign focuses on 10 "child-rich and playground-poor" cities: Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Washington, DC. However, for other areas, the KaBOOM! Playground Pool offers opportunities for organizations to receive matching funds to initiate and support community playgrounds.

Work and Family Issues

Families and Work Institute
330 Seventh Avenue, 14th Floor
New York, NY 10005
Phone: 212-465-2044
Fax: 212-465-8637
Web site: www.familiesandwork.org
Families and Work Institute is a nonprofit organization that addresses the changing nature of work and family life by finding research-based strategies that help families, workplaces and communities support each other.

Entrepreneurial Parent
Web site: www.en-parent.com
This site is a community and career resource for parents looking to balance work and family on their own terms. It addresses the needs of entrepreneurial parents on both the business and parenting front – from colleague camaraderie to professional career counseling, from quick-tip articles to inspirational profiles.

Things for Kids to Do

Afterschool Alliance
Phone: 202-296-9378
Web site: www.mott.org
Web site: www.ed.gov/21stcclc
Web site: www.jcpenney.net/company/cando
Coordinated by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, this alliance of public, private and nonprofit groups is committed to raising awareness and expanding resources for after-school programs. The goal is to ensure that every child in America has access to quality after-school programs by the year 2010.

Boy Scouts of America
Web site: www.bsa.scouting.org
More than 300 local councils that provide quality youth programs, including Tiger Cubs, Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Venturing.

Campfire Boys and Girls
4610 Madison Avenue
Kansas City, MO 64112
Phone: 816-756-1950
Fax: 816-756-0258
Web site: www.campfire.org
Through informal educational opportunities in clubs, child care settings, classrooms and camps, supports the development of motivated, self-confident boys and girls.

Girl Scouts
420 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10018
Phone: 1-800-GSUSA4U or 1-800-478-7248
Web site: www.gsusa.org
Provides girls opportunities to develop their potential and have fun with their peers in a supportive, all-girl setting. A movement that gives girls from all segments of American life a chance to develop their potential, to make friends, and to become a vital part of their community. Based on ethical values, it opens up a world of opportunity for girls, working in partnership with adult volunteers. Its sole focus is to meet the special needs of girls.

Also from the Study Circles Resource Center

Changing Faces, Changing Communities: Immigration & race, jobs, schools, and language differences, 2nd ed. 1997. A discussion guide designed to help communities face the challenges and meet the opportunities that come with immigration. In addition to six discussion sessions, this guide also provides pointers on how to involve public officials in study circles.

Facing the Challenge of Racism and Race Relations: Democratic Dialogue and Action for Stronger Communities, 3rd ed. 1997. Built on the success of two previous editions, this guide offers five sessions that discuss history, institutional racism, economic opportunity, public policy, and strategies for change. It also provides tips for organizing community-wide study circle programs action examples from around the country.

Confronting Violence in Our Communities: A Guide for Involving Citizens in Public Dialogue and Problem Solving, 1994. A four-session discussion guide examining how violence affects our lives, what causes violence, and what can be done in neighborhoods and schools.

Education: How Can Schools and Communities Work Together to Meet the Challenge?: A Guide for Involving Community Members in Public Dialogue and Problem Solving. 1995. A multi-session discussion guide which examines the challenges schools face and the ways in which community members and educators can work together to improve education.

Protecting Communities, Serving the Public: Police and residents building relationships to work together. 2000. A five-session discussion guide to help communities improve working relationships between residents and police departments by building trust and respect, developing better policies, and making changes for safer communities.

Toward a More Perfect Union in an Age of Diversity: A Guide for Building Stronger Communities through Public Dialogue. 1997. A four-session discussion guide examining ideas about unity, diversity, and pluralism and how they affect us as individuals, as members of organizations and businesses, as residents of our communities, and as citizens of our country.

Smart Talk for Growing Communities: Meeting the Challenges of Growth and Development. 1998. A five-session discussion guide which helps communities address the effects of development and find ways to make growth work for them. This guide also provides pointers on how to involve public officials in study circles and numerous action examples from around the country.

Youth Issues, Youth Voices: A Guide for Engaging Youth and Adults in Public Dialogue and Problem Solving. 1996. A multi-session discussion guide geared toward bringing young people and adults together to address the community issues that involve and impact them, from race relations to substance abuse.

A Guide for Training Study Circle Facilitators. 1998. Presents a step-by-step agenda for a basic study circle training program, as well as information on building and supporting an ongoing training program, including recruitment, skill building, training young people as facilitators, and other related information. Training and evaluation materials are also included.

Acknowledgments

A special thank you to the people who organized study circles to test this guide in Waco, Texas; Arlington, Texas; Indianapolis, Indiana; Des Moines, Iowa; and Tacoma, Washington. We learned a great deal from their observations. We also thank the many people who shaped this guide by reading drafts and offering constructive criticism and useful suggestions. These reviewers, along with organizers of the field tests, are listed below. (The Study Circles Resource Center is solely responsible for any errors in the guide.)

Diane Arnold, *Hawthorne Community Center,* Indianapolis, Indiana

Cindy Sesler Ballard, *Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth,* Austin, Texas

Bettie Beard, *Heart of Texas Council of Governments,* Waco, Texas

John Borquist, *Dane County Department of Human Services,* Madison, Wisconsin

Gail Brandt, *Home, Safe,* Tacoma Washington

Charles Bruner, *Child and Family Policy Center,* Des Moines, Iowa

Deanna Carlson, *Family Research Council,* Washington, D.C.

Janet Dougherty-Smith, *Clackamas Education Service District,* Marylhurst, Oregon

Donna Freeman, *Fort Howard/Jefferson Neighborhood Family Resource Center,* Green Bay, Wisconsin

Sid Gardner, *Center for the Collaboration for Children, California State University,* Fullerton, California

Edith Johnson, *People Helping People,* Tacoma, Washington

Beth Kelly, *People United for Families,* Denver, Colorado

Reverend Phyllis J. Leopold, *Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport,* Connecticut

Loretta Milam, *Hampton Coalition for Youth,* Hampton, Virginia

Jackie Mitchell, *The Center for Rural Life and Economic Development,* Alcorn, Mississippi

Kent Newman, *Wallace House Foundation,* Des Moines, Iowa

Michelle Sargent, Portland, Maine

Jackie Schley, *Hunter Pointe Homeowners Association,* Arlington, Texas

Penfield Tate, *Colorado State Representative,* Denver, Colorado

Mary Lou Tletz, *Community Family Life Services,* Washington, D.C.

John Young, *Waco Tribune-Herald,* Waco, Texas

Elaine Zimmerman, *Connecticut Commission on Children,* Hartford, Connecticut

STUDY CIRCLES
RESOURCE CENTER

Study Circles Resource Center
P.O. Box 203
Pomfret, CT 06258
Telephone: 860-928-2616
Fax: 860-928-3713
E-mail: scrc@studycircles.org
Web site: www.studycircles.org

This guide is a manual for study circle participants, organizers, and facilitators.

A project of the Topsfield Foundation, Inc.